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**AFGHANISTAN**

## SUCCESS STORY

# Afghan Products Showcased at Moscow Trade Fair

**Assisting Afghan entrepreneurs to access new markets is a key priority for USAID.**



Photo: USAID/ASMED

*An Afghan entrepreneur displays his fresh fruit at the trade fair.*



Photo: USAID/ASMED

*Among other products, the trade fair featured high-quality Afghan carpets.*



Photo: USAID/ASMED

*Afghan textiles and handicrafts generated significant interest from Russian buyers.*

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Afghanistan produces many premium consumer products, including carpets, leather, fresh and dried fruits, handicrafts, gemstones, and marble. After a long absence, these products are now reaching international markets, where they are recognized for their exceptional quality and value. Russia is one of these markets, where a recent trade fair of Afghan products kicked off negotiations on sales estimated at \$15 million.

The fair – the first of its kind in 20 years – ran December 9-13, 2009, at the All-Russian Exhibition Center in Moscow, and provided 31 Afghan entrepreneurs with the opportunity to showcase their wares for Russian buyers. Participants displayed and sold their goods, learned about the interests of Russian consumers, and connected with Russian import companies.

“Before the exhibition, we only had heard there is a good market for Afghan products in Russia,” said one of the Afghan traders. “The exhibition gave us the chance to see the really high interest Russian consumers have in our products. No matter to whom we sell, what is important at the end is the consumers who make the demand.”

In addition to making direct sales totaling \$500,000, participants secured contracts for the supply of carpets, marble and dried fruits. One trader signed an \$800,000 contract to supply white marble to build a football stadium in the resort town of Sochi on the Black Sea. Another entrepreneur will supply 100 tons of almonds, raisins, black peanuts, and walnuts to various Russian markets. The exhibitors also tested market potential and prepared for future exhibitions in the lucrative Russian market. Plans are now underway to establish a permanent market for Afghan goods in Moscow.

Assisting Afghan entrepreneurs in accessing new markets is a key priority for USAID. Through technical and financial support provided by the Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development project, USAID is enabling Afghan businesses in targeted sectors to attend trade fairs and expand their markets. By assisting in the establishment and growth of small and medium enterprises, USAID is facilitating the growth of a key segment of Afghanistan’s economic system.